



Fall 2020





In 1918 the Seattle Municipal Railway purchased 25 streetcars from Twin City Rapid Transit. They were among the class B-3 cars, the earliest TCRT home-built design turned out by the 31st Street Shops from 1898 to 1902. This was originally TCRT #763 from 1899.

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***Used streetcars
sold by TCRT***

-Brian Long

As the 1890s progressed, Thomas Lowry and the other officers of Twin City Rapid Transit (TCRT), grew in their frustrations with the streetcars constructed by the various streetcar builders in the United States. Streetcars of the era were found to be inadequate for the demands required of streetcars within the Twin Cities. Thus, upon the decision to construct home-built streetcars, and the entrance of these cars into service, the earlier streetcars that had been plying the system in Minneapolis and Saint Paul became displaced and some were sold to other railways in North America.

Previous publications on streetcars in Minnesota, such as *The Electric Railways of Minnesota* by Russell L. Olson, have discussed the used streetcars sold by TCRT to other systems in Minnesota. Most notable was Duluth, which TCRT management controlled. However, the streetcars that found homes elsewhere, mostly outside Minnesota, have received less attention. Thus, this article discusses the overall picture of the used streetcars sold by TCRT. As TCRT flooded the market, other systems in North America benefited from the purchase of lower cost streetcars that could be quickly placed into service.

This article is organized into three parts. First, the historical context is laid out concerning the desire of TCRT to build their own fleet of streetcars and sell their used streetcars. Second, the railways that purchased used streetcars from TCRT will be discussed.

Finally, the article will end with a numerical list of used streetcars sold, including basic technical details of those streetcars.

TCRT's streetcar fleet evolves

On December 24, 1889, streetcar 188 (pulling trailer number 190) became the first electric streetcar placed in operation in the Twin Cities on the newly rebuilt 4th Avenue line in Minneapolis. Car 188 had been part of an order of 16-foot horsecars constructed by the Pullman Palace Car Company in 1886 and had been converted to an electric streetcar in 1889 by placing the car body on a motorized streetcar truck. Nine other cars of the same 1886 horsecar order from Pullman had also been converted to electric streetcars for the 4th Avenue line, but their numbers are not clear (cars 179 and 185 may have been motorized as an October 1902 TCRT record listed the two cars as "condemned motor car bodies").

With the dawn of the electric streetcar on the Minneapolis Street Railway (MSR), the conversion and divestment of horsecars began. It is known that sixty-three MSR horsecars were put up for sale in 1891, and these cars went to systems in Montana, Wisconsin, and in Duluth, but the car numbers are unclear. Aside from the ten cars in the 1886 Pullman order converted to electric streetcars, the remaining cars in that order became trailers pulled by the streetcars. Further, horsecars numbered 202 to 232 and 233 to 262 became trailers for the streetcars. Former horsecars, with numbers 263 to 302, were converted to electric streetcars in 1892 by lengthening the car bodies and placing them on motorized streetcar

trucks. After rebuilding, cars 262 to 302 were renumbered into the 569 to 606 series (except 284 kept its number as it was the first of the series rebuilt and was considered experimental). All of the Minneapolis conversions required regauging the cars to operate on standard gauge track.

The Saint Paul City Railway (SPCR) was also in the process of conversion at the same time as its sister system in Minneapolis, and its first line converted to electric streetcar operation was the Grand Avenue line on February 22, 1890. Saint Paul's first streetcar in operation, numbered 169, had been converted from an 18-foot open side cable grip car, built in 1888 by the Laclede Car Company. Eight other cable grip cars had also been converted to electric streetcars for the opening of the Grand Avenue line.

With the conversion to electric streetcars, the SPCR began to divest of its horsecars, with extra cable grip cars and trailers joining after the conversion of the East 7th Street cable line in 1893. Many horsecars had previously been sold to lines in Billings, Montana; Duluth, and in Missouri throughout the 1880s. A lack of existing records makes it difficult to know which car numbers became streetcars or trailers, but it is known that many former horsecars became trailers for the streetcar lines. Many other former horsecars ended up being damaged or destroyed in a series of carbarn fires. All cable grip cars not used on the Selby Avenue line were probably all destroyed in an 1896 carbarn fire. Finally, with the success of the 1891-1892 rebuild of car 284 in Minneapolis, thirty streetcars from Saint Paul were rebuilt from former horsecars in 1892. The former horse-

Front cover: TCRT went through three generations of electric streetcars. When it came time to retire them, some still had value on the second-hand market, often for small city systems. By our count, 241 cars were sold. Car 621, built in 1892, went to Iowa interurban Charles City Western, where it survived until 1957.

cars used for this project were cars built by Brownell & Wright and John Stephenson Company in the 1880s. After the rebuilds, these cars were numbered 528 and 541 to 569.

In 1892, MSR placed an order for twenty double truck streetcars with the American Car Company. These were constructed to a design submitted to the manufacturer by MSR, and consisted of details such as lateral (forward facing) seating for forty-three passengers, clerestory roof, rounded front end, a wide rear entrance and exit vestibule, and a small front platform door for the motorman. Numbered 607 to 626, these cars were a departure from previous streetcar orders placed by MSR or SPCR, because of the many details seen as improvements over previous streetcar orders. The use of lateral seats, rather than longitudinal seats, improved the comfort of the passengers, the cars were higher off the ground than many of the other streetcars in the current fleet, and consisted of a wider car body that allowed for lateral seating. Besides having larger capacity, the double-truck design provided a much smoother ride at higher speeds.

In terms of the development of the standard fleet of streetcars, MSR 607 to 626 represented a seminal moment. These cars allowed MSR, and by extension TCRT, to experiment with their own streetcar design to test the various modifications and improvements in regular service. The higher and wider car body showed the usefulness of these cars in snowy and icy conditions, when compared to the narrower and lower cars in the fleet at the time. Further, the two-motor Bemis trucks these 41,700 pound cars were originally constructed with were found to be underpowered. When this realization was combined with the unsatisfactory experience of two-motor trucks on

some of the earlier home-built streetcars, TCRT began placing four-motor trucks under almost all of its streetcars in late-1899 (C-3 class 868 to 899 were built in 1901 with two-motor trucks presumably because these cars weighed only 31,000 pounds, due to their shorter length).

Finally, the utility of these cars was confirmed in the rebuilding efforts to update them to company standards between 1901 and 1903, a few years after TCRT became committed to constructing its own streetcars. Cars 607 to 626 underwent interior and exterior rebuilding and varnishing in 1901. Further, cars 608 to 626 were rebuilt with air brakes and the more powerful four-motor Brill trucks between 1902 and 1904. Aside from the destruction of car 607 in a 1901 collision with a train, the cars in this series remained in operation until June 1914 and most were sold to other systems.

However, stepping back to the early 1890s, while TCRT placed orders for more streetcars from outside manufacturers after this time, the design of cars 607 to 626 was not repeated until streetcars were home-built. The lack of an order for similar cars did not mean TCRT decided to move away from the improved features of cars 607 to 626, as TCRT commenced a rebuilding program of many of the cars in the fleet. Small rebuild efforts came first, with the streetcars in the fleet upgraded to incorporate the now recognizable features of closed front vestibules and rear platforms with wire mesh gates. The enclosing of the front vestibules was required by a law passed in the Minnesota legislature in 1893, while the addition of wire mesh gates was a safety improvement for passengers.

The open streetcars also received fixed barriers running the length of the streetcars to prevent passengers getting on or off the car in places other

than the designated entrance and exit. Aisles were created down the middle of the open cars and the footboards running along the sides of the open cars were removed. The addition of gates and barriers ended the practice of able-bodied men boarding and alighting streetcars while in motion (streetcars stopped for women, children, elderly, and disabled), which was a holdover from the days of the much slower moving horsecar.

These improvements began in 1893 and were made at TCRT's rebuilding shop in the former Minneapolis, Lyndale, & Lake Minnetonka (the Motor Line) roundhouse at 31st Street & Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis. Even in those early years of electric power, TCRT was modifying and rebuilding its streetcars to meet the demands required by local conditions. Some of these improvements followed changes in the practice of the streetcar and interurban industry, but TCRT was also slowly realizing how unsuitable streetcars produced by the existing manufacturers were to the specifics of operation within the Twin Cities, with one of those specifics being the Minnesota winters.

Ultimately, with the increased experience gained by the rebuilding shop in making both small improvements and major rebuilds of streetcars, by 1898 the decision had been made by TCRT to produce a full fleet of home-built streetcars. A new shop was built at 31st & Nicollet to make that happen. The first new streetcar produced by TCRT was Thomas Lowry's private streetcar and was quickly followed by the first production group of two streetcars for passenger service. This pair, car numbers 737 and 738, set the stage for the divestment of almost all the non-TCRT constructed streetcars, as well as some home-built streetcars, over the next few decades. Most of this

original equipment was scrapped or destroyed but selling the original streetcars on the used market was a way to recoup some of the investment.

Following a series of carbarn fires in the 1880s and 1890s, which destroyed at least 183 streetcars and horsecars combined, and with the ongoing construction of home-built streetcars, TCRT began the complete retirement of the original streetcar fleet. This effort gained traction very quickly.

An example of how willing TCRT was to get rid of streetcars comes from their giving twenty-two to a man, who had only asked for three, so he could build a house (that still stands) out of the car bodies on his property in Mahtomedi. Many other streetcars were placed on company property near 31st Street & Bryant Avenue South, and ads were placed in the newspapers inviting the public to chop up the cars for firewood.

In this way, and in other ways TCRT found resourceful, most of the original streetcar fleet was scrapped or destroyed. However, this divestment also occurred within the larger context of streetcar and interurban line construction across North America, so TCRT also capitalized on this opportunity by selling many of their used streetcars.

Over a period spanning two decades, TCRT ultimately sold used streetcars to thirty-four streetcar and interurban systems, two steam railroads, and one mining company. The first used streetcars were a pair sold to Great Falls, Montana in 1903. This sale was one of many to the streetcar systems of smaller cities and towns that wanted to rapidly begin or expand their streetcar services. Single-truck cars were a good fit for most small city systems. The final group of streetcars sold was in 1920 to the Winnipeg Electric Company of Winnipeg,

Manitoba for the purpose of replacing part of their streetcar fleet destroyed by a carbarn fire. By 1912, all single-truck passenger streetcars had disappeared from the TCRT system, and the entire system consisted of home-built streetcars by the end of the decade.

The following section lists the railways that purchased used streetcars from TCRT. The systems are listed in chronological order of their purchases. Abbreviations are used to note which of the companies within the Twin Cities originally purchased or built/rebuilt the streetcar.

Railways that purchased used TCRT streetcars

Listed in chronological order.

Highland Improvement Company – Minnesota

Thomas Lowry gave or sold MSR 548 in 1892 to the Highland Improvement Company (HIC) of Duluth, in which Lowry had a financial interest. Car 548 was a double-truck open streetcar. The HIC streetcar line was constructed to help increase real estate development on the bluffs above Duluth. This line was built to connect with the top end of the Duluth Incline, which was constructed simultaneously by DSR. The line began operating on September 27, 1892, but financial difficulty meant that DSR was contracted to be the operator of the line six days later. The HIC was supposed to reimburse DSR's expenses for the operation, but further financial difficulties meant the Highland Line was sold to DSR on April 21, 1893. Car 548, which operated as number 67 for HIC and 95 for DSR, served until scrapped in 1904. The Highland Line continued operation with DSR until abandonment on September 4, 1939.

Milwaukee Street Railway – Wisconsin

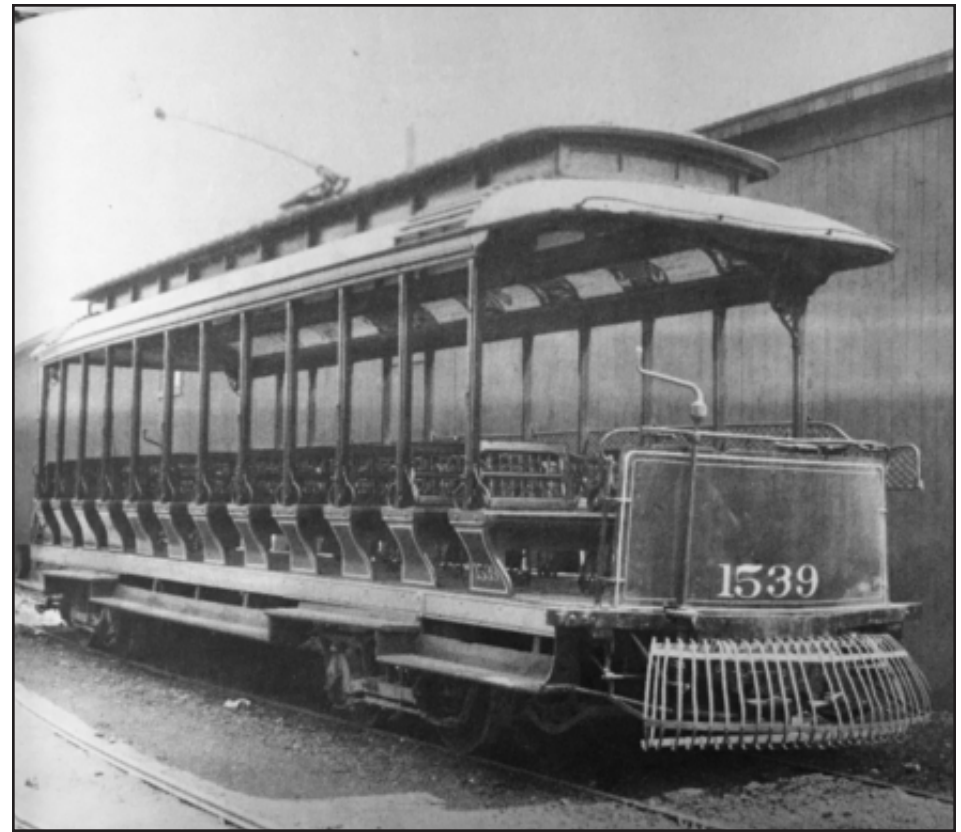
Thomas Lowry either gave or sold MSR 539 to the Milwaukee Street Railway in 1892. This car was a double-truck open streetcar built as part of the first full order of double-truck streetcars for MSR. The Milwaukee Street Railway grew out of a horsecar system to operate its first electric streetcar in 1890. The street railway grew to become part of The Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Company (TM), which was the largest street and interurban railway system in Wisconsin. Their last streetcar operated in 1958.

Duluth Street Railway – Minnesota and Wisconsin

The Duluth Street Railway (DSR) purchased more used streetcars from TCRT than any other street railway system, beginning with their first purchase in 1900. Further, the DSR also benefitted from many new streetcars built in TCRT's own shops. The streetcars that went to DSR from TCRT have been discussed in significant detail in other sources, so they will not be discussed here. Please refer to Twin Ports by Trolley by Aaron Isaacs and The Electric Railways of Minnesota for detailed discussions on this topic.

Great Falls Street Railway - Montana

Russ Olson's working papers list two cars having been sold in 1903 to the streetcar system in Great Falls, Montana. No further information about these cars, such as the builder, the type of cars, or the date(s) they were sold are available. Sources found on the Great Falls system do not list the individual cars purchased by the system. The system in Great Falls began as a steam dummy line in 1890, was electrified in 1891, and operated



Northern Car Company delivered car #539 in 1892 and almost immediately it went to the Milwaukee Street Railway and was renumbered 1539. Photo from the book TM.

until its shutdown in 1931.

Kansas City, Leavenworth, & Western – Kansas and Missouri

Information on these cars is scarce, but The Electric Railways of Minnesota notes MSR cars 444, 450, 459, 461, 489, and 499 were sold to the Kansas City Western in 1905. All were single-truck closed streetcars. However, it is not clear as to the fate of these cars. Trolley through the Countryside by Allison Chandler cites a Leavenworth, KS newspaper article from July 1905 noting the purchase of city cars for Leavenworth. The only other purchase of passenger equipment made by the company in 1905 was for double-truck interurban cars,

so it can be assumed the newspaper article referenced the former MSR cars. City streetcar service in Leavenworth continued until 1925, but Heartland Traction by Edward Conrad indicates the "Home Line" between Lansing and Fort Leavenworth, via downtown Leavenworth remained in operation until 1927. It is not clear how long the former MSR cars were used in service in Leavenworth. Interurban service between Kansas City and Leavenworth ended in 1938.

Danville Street Railway & Light - Illinois

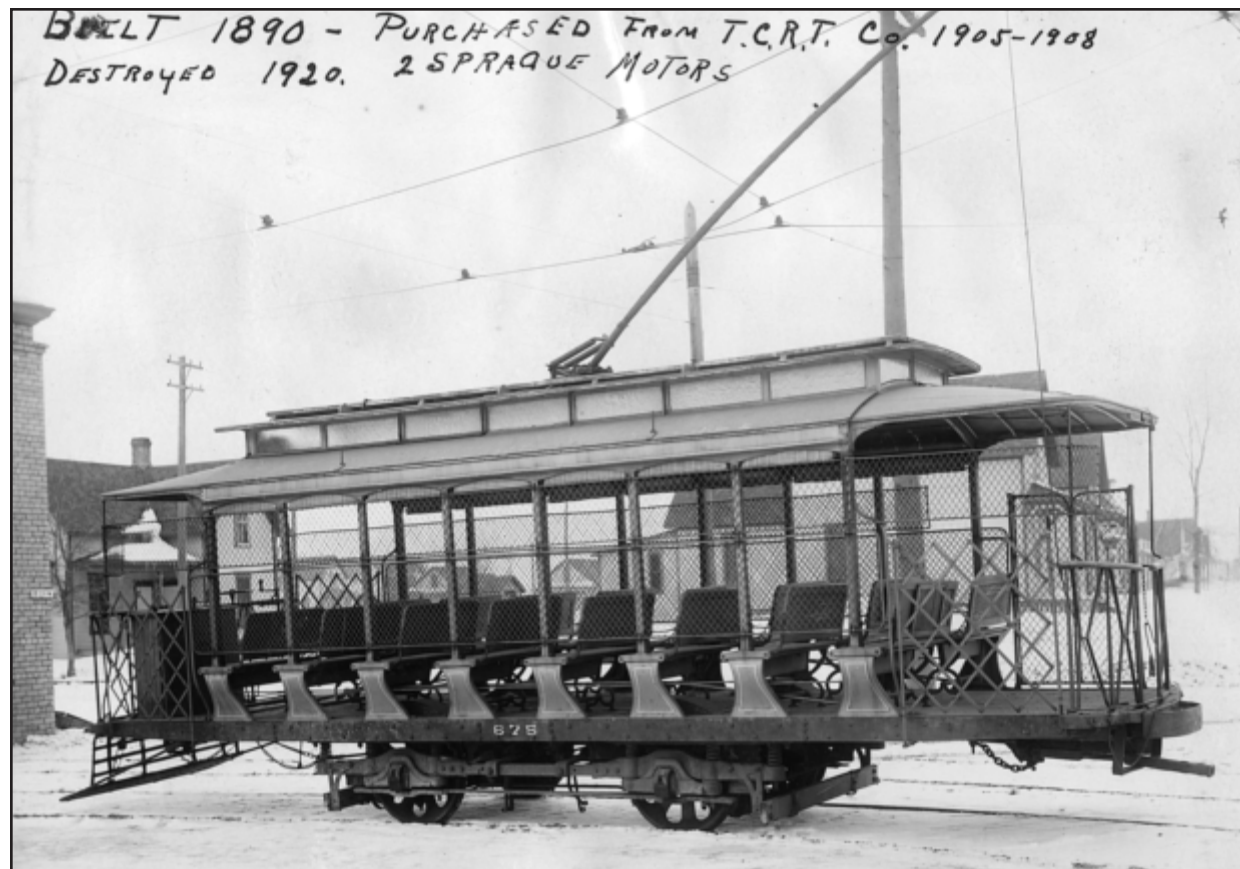
Three streetcars were purchased from TCRT by the Danville Street Railway & Light company in 1905.

These cars were MSR 383 and 474 and SPCR 354. All three were single-truck closed cars, however the cars did not have trucks when sold to Danville, and both MSR cars were lacking electrical equipment. The source material found does not indicate how long these cars were in service in Danville.

Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway – Minnesota and North Dakota

The Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway purchased a total of thirty cars from TCRT in the years 1905 and 1906. All were single-truck cars, but only twelve were motorized. Of the motorized streetcars, the closed streetcars consisted of MSR 466, 476, and 480. The open streetcars were MSR 638, 639, 651, 675, 687, and 688 and SPCR 1591, 1592, and 1629. The remaining eighteen cars were former open horsecars that had been turned into open trailers. The open trailers were MSR 207, 213, 219, 224, 225, 226, 235, 238, 244, 245, 246, 247, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, and 262.

The Electric Railways of Minnesota notes the equipment was purchased primarily for operation on the line to the North Dakota Fairgrounds in Fargo. This purchase was to supplement Fargo & Moorhead's original order of seven new single-truck streetcars, as the number of streetcar lines was quickly expanded during the first few years of the system's operation. Little information exists concerning the service lives of these cars in Fargo and Moorhead. However, by 1933 the system's fleet consisted of sixteen Birney streetcars, one passenger trailer, and six work motor cars. Thus, there is a possibility, though slight, that a few of these cars may have been converted to work service and survived to that date. The last streetcar in Fargo and Moorhead ran in 1937.



Fargo-Moorhead was a big customer, buying 30 used TCRT streetcars. Above: Towing two former TCRT horsecars.

Left: Our records say car 675 was actually built in 1893.

Terre Haute Traction & Light Company - Indiana

The Terre Haute system purchased MSR 584, 586, and 589 in 1905. These were all single-truck closed streetcars that MSR had rebuilt from horsecars. Their service life was most likely on the city lines of the Terre Haute system. In 1907, the Terre Haute system was consolidated with other lines into the Terre Haute, Indianapolis & Eastern Traction Company. This company was further consolidated into the Indiana Railroad System in 1931, and the Terre Haute part of the system continued operation until 1940.

Kankakee Electric – Illinois

Three streetcars were purchased by the Kankakee Electric in 1906. These cars were MSR 367, 486, and 576. All three were single-truck closed streetcars, and 576 was a former horsecar. Kankakee Electric's entire fleet of streetcars consisted of single-truck cars throughout its history. The system was in operation from 1891 to 1931. The history of the former TCRT cars on the Kankakee system is not available.

Butte City Street Railroad - Montana

The Butte, Montana system purchased streetcars from TCRT in 1906 and 1907. The cars purchased in 1906 were MSR 363, 366, 375, 382, and 390, as well as SPCR 334, 336, 352, 353, and 1366. The cars purchased in 1907 were MSR 377, 387, and 402, as well as SPCR 331. All these cars were single-truck closed streetcars. No further information on their operation is available. The Butte system operated from 1886 to 1937.

Interstate Traction Company – Minnesota

The Interstate Traction Company, serving Park Point, Minnesota, purchased

six single-truck open trailers from TCRT in 1906. These cars were SPCR 221, 226, 229, 239, 240, and 241. All six cars were originally constructed as open cable car trailers. The reason for the purchase of the six cars was the expected increase in ridership with a new company-built White City amusement park nearing completion along their line. The streetcar line in Park Point was folded into the Duluth Street Railway on September 1, 1917 and continued until the line was abandoned on June 15, 1931. The six former TCRT trailers were not part of the sale to DSR, so it is assumed they were scrapped prior to mid-1917.

Wausau Street Railway - Wisconsin

The Wausau Street Railway purchased four cars from TCRT, numbered MSR 640, 686, 689, and 690, between 1906 and 1907. These cars were all single-truck open streetcars. Badger Traction by Joseph M. Canfield notes cars 689 and 690 were rebuilt in Wausau as unpowered trailers, but Russ Olson's working papers note these cars were sold as bodies only. The Wausau system operated from 1907 to 1940.

Oskaloosa Traction & Light Company - Iowa

Three single-truck open cable car trailers were sold to the Oskaloosa Traction & Light Company in 1906. The three trailers were SPCR 224, 230, and 245. This 1906 purchase also coincided with the construction of a 3-mile interurban line to the town of Beacon. City service in Oskaloosa began with horsecars in 1880, changed to electric streetcars in 1898, added an interurban line in 1906, and ceased operation in 1926.



This photo from the book Badger Traction inside the Wausau carbarn shows four single truck open cars, almost certainly from TCRT, being modified for use as trailers.

Boise City Railway - Idaho

Multiple lines operated in the Boise, ID area, and upon the linking of all systems, created a transit loop through the Treasure Valley area. In 1906, the Boise City Railway purchased SPCR 333 and 1590. This was followed the next year by the purchase of MSR 472 and SPCR 364. Cars 333 and 364 were single-truck closed streetcars and 1590 was a single-truck open streetcar. Car 472 was originally a single-truck closed streetcar, but TCRT had removed the motors from 472 in 1905, thus making the car a trailer prior to being sold to Boise. Information on their service in Boise is not available, but streetcars in the Treasure Valley operated between 1891 and 1928.

Unknown street railway - Nebraska

Two single-truck streetcars were purchased by a street railway in Nebraska in 1906. The first car, MSR 419 was a single-truck closed streetcar. The second car, SPCR 1620, was a single-truck open streetcar. It is not currently known which street railway purchased these cars as records only indicate the cars went to Nebraska.

Devils Lake & Chautauqua Transfer – North Dakota

In 1906, the Devils Lake & Chautauqua Transfer purchased single-truck closed streetcar MSR 595 and single-truck open streetcars SPCR 1602 and 1607 from TCRT. The Devils Lake & Chautauqua Transfer was incorporated in 1903 to take over a steam dummy line that had been operating



A steam dummy pulls a train of former streetcars on the Devils Lake & Chautauqua Transfer. The second and third cars look like they may be from TCRT.

since 1900. The line's existence was entirely due to the annual Chautauqua assemblies held at the lake, thus creating the need for the transit link stretching nearly five miles between the lake and the railroad depot in town. Operation continued until abandoned in 1917.

The sources found on this line indicated it was always a steam dummy line, so it can be assumed the streetcars sold to the line were used as unpowered passenger cars for the steam train. The intention had been to electrify the line, and the idea was alive even as late as 1911, as the November 11, 1911 issue of the *Electric Railway Journal* includes a brief mention that the line might be electrified by 1912. As previously noted, electrification was not to be.

Henderson Traction - Kentucky

In 1907, Henderson Traction in Kentucky purchased MSR 408 and 413,

as well as SPCR 339. All three cars were single-truck closed streetcars but were sold as car bodies only. Information on their service in Kentucky is not known. Henderson Traction began operation of their horsecar line in 1889, electrified in 1894, and operated until their shut-down in 1923. Henderson was also linked with Evansville, Indiana by an interurban line from 1912 to 1928, which was owned by the Evansville & Ohio Valley Railway.

Granite City Railway – Minnesota

The Granite City Railway of Saint Cloud purchased MSR 570, 577, 579, and 581 from TCRT in 1907. All four cars had been originally constructed as single-truck closed horsecars and later rebuilt into streetcars by MSR. Like the records of other systems, the service lives of these cars are not clear. The Granite City Railway began as a horsecar operation in 1887, electrified in 1892, and ran its last streetcar in 1936.

Marshalltown Light, Power, & Railway Company - Iowa

The Marshalltown system purchased SPCR 518 in 1908. This car was a single-truck closed streetcar and was perhaps purchased due to the expansion of streetcar service in the town the year before. The Marshalltown system operated from 1892 to 1928.

Schuylkill Valley Railway - Pennsylvania

In 1908, the Schuylkill Valley Railway purchased numerous streetcars from TCRT. The cars were MSR 378, 412, 457, 460, 463, 479, 498, and 522, as well as SPCR 1513 and 1539. All cars purchased were single-truck closed streetcars, but the cars were purchased as car bodies lacking trucks. The Schuylkill Valley Railway operated streetcar and interurban lines in and around Norristown,

Pennsylvania. Their last electric streetcar operated in 1933.

Grand Forks Street Railway – Minnesota and North Dakota

Grand Forks purchased SPCR 1610, 1613, 1626, and 1630 in 1909. All four cars had been constructed as single-truck open streetcars, but Grand Forks purchased these cars as trailers. The *Electric Railways of Minnesota* notes the motors and controls were stripped from the cars prior to the cars being available for sale, and upon arrival, had been renumbered 2, 4, 6, and 8. The cars were purchased in conjunction with the opening of a new streetcar line to the Grand Forks Fairgrounds.

The Grand Forks system gradually converted their fleet to Birney streetcars throughout the 1920s. Thus, the former TCRT cars were most likely removed from service prior to 1930.



This St. Cloud car may be former TCRT. The window count is right. The front platform looks like the standard TCRT enclosure home-built to comply with the 1893 vestibule law. It has a different power truck, but that could have been changed out.

Street railway service in Grand Forks ended in 1934, having started operation in 1904.

Denison & Sherman Railway - Texas

Three cars (MSR 373 and 384, SPCR 344) were sold to the Denison & Sherman Interurban Railway in Texas in 1910. All three cars were single-truck closed streetcars. Texas Electric Railway by Jonnie J. Myers makes no mention of these cars in the notes on the Denison & Sherman line, nor are these cars mentioned in the book's notes on the Texas Traction Company, which purchased the Denison & Sherman in 1911. However, Myers' book was the first major publication on the Texas Electric, and he noted he was working with incomplete information at the time.

Mankato Electric Traction – Minnesota

In 1910, Mankato Electric Traction acquired MSR 414, and the following year purchased MSR 526 and 587. All three were single-truck closed streetcars, with 587 having been rebuilt from a horsecar. Specifics on the operation of these three cars is not available, but the Mankato system was noted to have six motorized streetcars in 1923. Thus, one or more of these cars may have been in service at that time. Electric street railway service in Mankato lasted from 1907 to 1930, but that does not encompass the full history, as Mankato also had a horsecar line from 1886 to 1895.

International Traction - Michigan

International Traction in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan purchased SPCR cars 567, 568, and 569 from TCRT in 1910. All three cars were single-truck closed streetcars rebuilt from horsecars. International Traction itself operated from 1902 to 1941.

Aberdeen Street Railway Company – South Dakota

This streetcar system was rather short-lived, beginning operation on November 24, 1910 and shutting down on July 31, 1922. The system purchased SPCR cars 203, 205, 303, 308, 1601, and 1631 from TCRT in 1911. Cars 1601 and 1631 were single-truck open streetcars, cars 203 and 205 were single-truck open trailers, and cars 303 and 308 were single-truck closed trailers. The sources on the Aberdeen streetcar system do not mention the other purchase made from TCRT, but The Electric Railways of Minnesota does note TCRT work car/snowplow 16 was purchased by Aberdeen in 1910.

Cripple Creek Coal Company - Illinois

Twin City Lines had a business relationship with the Cripple Creek Coal Company of Illinois as a supplier of coal for the Main Steam Station. In 1911, TCRT sold car 899 to the coal company. Car 899 was a TCRT double-truck standard design built in 1901. Information on this car is scarce, how it was operated for Cripple Creek is not available to the author, and it is not known how long the car operated for the Cripple Creek. Perhaps it was used as a shuttle car for company employees, but that is speculation based on practices of mining companies in Minnesota, and how those companies used streetcars they purchased second-hand.

Great Northern Allouez Yard in Superior – Wisconsin

As many know, the Great Northern is not generally thought of as an electric railroad, unless the main line through the Cascade Mountains is discussed. However, the Great Northern did purchase a single streetcar from



From the Wisconsin Times, Oct. 14, 1923

Superior's own Toonerville is the green-painted, four-wheeled perambulator that rocks its way from one end of the Great Northern Allouez yard to the other, carrying workers on the road to and from work.

It's a regular street car with a trolley, straw seats, wheels and a motorman. It lacks but one thing--you don't pay any fare when you ride on it. Great Northern employees say this is the most agreeable thing about the car.

The train has a station 'n everything where the railroad men congregate and exchange remarks about the little car as they wait for it to carry them to the other end of the yard. The station is a four-by-four, red structure, its walls bearing initials of practically every railroad man working out of Allouez.

As seen by the above picture the car is about to start on one of its journeys to the other end of the yard. The handsome looking individual with the broad smile is "Billy" McGrath, Great Northern call boy bound for work. The others in the picture are ordinary switchmen.

The car makes 16 trips per day, snow, rain, sleet or hail having no effect on its 24-hour schedule. Come what may the Toonerville blithely (if rockily) pursues its cheerful way back and forth between the extreme ends of the yard carrying the great and small alike--from the most humble checker to the "Soop" himself.

The three motormen on the Toonerville are W. A. Hill who goes on at 2:50 pm and stays until 10:50 pm; John Cleare who works until 6:30 am; and Peter De Merre, who works until 2:45 pm.

"I've made 40 miles and hour with the derved thing," said Mr. Hill, "but she rocks some at that gait."



Above: This photo from The Great Third Rail shows an interurban of the Chicago Aurora & De Kalb leading to two local cars of the Aurora Elgin & Chicago in downtown Aurora. The third car is an 1899 product of TCRT's 31st Street Shops.
Below: This not very good photo from the book Heartland Traction shows a pair of ex-TCRT 1892 American-built 600-series cars sold to the Kansas City, Kaw Valley & Western outside the Bonner Springs, Kansas car barn.

TCRT in 1913. The car was MSR 448, which was a single-truck closed streetcar. This car operated for the Great Northern as a shuttle car for employees connecting the Allouez yard and ore docks. Operations continued until 1927, when the GN removed the streetcar line and used a gasoline-powered shuttle car on the railroad yard tracks.

Aurora, Elgin, & Chicago, Fox River Division – Illinois

The four cars purchased from TCRT were primarily operated on the Aurora, Elgin, & Chicago's Fox River Division, so these cars were not part of the main line service between Chicago and Aurora or Chicago and Elgin. However, the Fox River Line did pro-

vide a direct connection between the cities of Aurora and Elgin as an interurban service. The Fox River Line purchased TCRT-built cars 782, 783, 784, and 785 in 1913 for interurban service. All four cars were of the TCRT double-truck standard car (gate car) design and were constructed in 1899. Although designed as streetcars by TCRT, their larger nature made them suitable for interurban service. The cars were renumbered 208, 210, 212, and 214, but three of them only saw service with this line for five years. Cars 208, 210, and 214 were sold to the Youngstown & Southern Railroad of Ohio in 1918, while 212 was retained by Fox River until it was scrapped in 1927. Two miles of the Fox River line

survive today as the demonstration railroad for the Fox River Trolley Museum.

Kansas City, Kaw Valley & Western – Kansas and Missouri

The Kansas City, Kaw Valley, & Western railway purchased cars 611, 614, 615, and 617 in 1914 to inaugurate their interurban service between Kansas City, MO and Bonner Springs, KS. These cars were double-truck closed streetcars built to a TCRT design by the American Car Company. Sources conflict in terms of the type of trucks underneath the cars upon delivery to the Kaw Valley. When Missouri Took the Trolley by Andrew Young notes the cars arrived with Bemis trucks, while Heartland Traction and Russ Olson's working papers note the cars arrived with Brill trucks. Brill trucks had been placed under these cars by TCRT in 1904 to replace the Bemis trucks originally under the cars. If Young is correct, this would mean that TCRT swapped out the Brill trucks for Bemis trucks prior to their sale to Kaw Valley, which is a plausible



scenario.

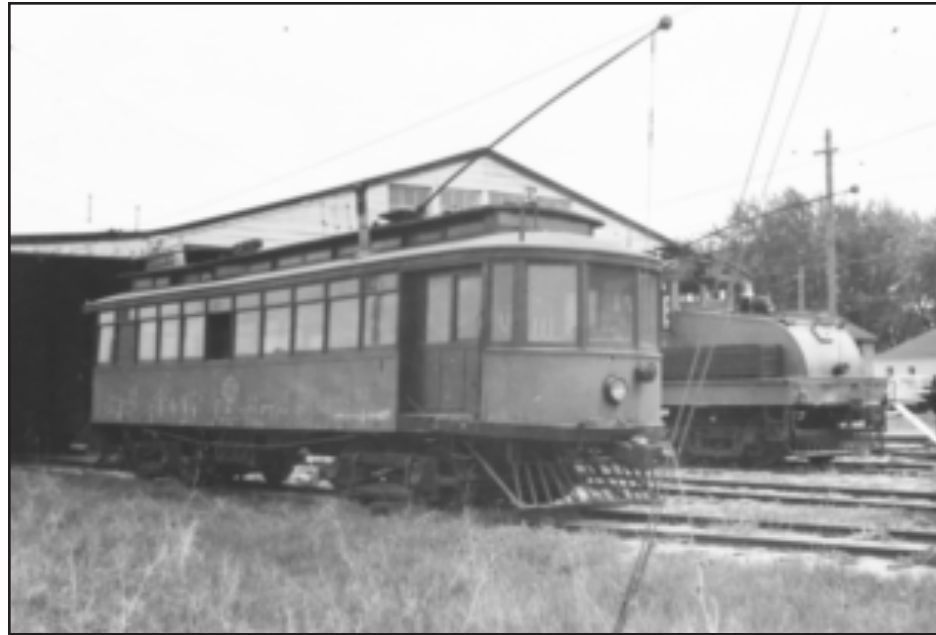
The primary reason these cars were purchased was because the new interurban cars the Kaw Valley line had ordered would not be ready in time for the opening of the line. Constructed by Cincinnati Car Company, they arrived later in 1914, so the former MSR cars were quickly replaced. It is not clear when the cars were scrapped, but Heartland Traction indicates they could have been taken out of service this early.

Kanawha Traction & Electric – West Virginia and Ohio

In 1914, the Kanawha Traction & Electric Company of Parkersburg, West Virginia purchased MSR cars 608, 609, 618, and 619. These cars were double-truck closed streetcars built to a custom design by the American Car Company in 1892. Their service for the Kanawha Valley line is not clear. The Kanawha system itself connected Parkersburg with Marietta, Ohio. Service began as horsecar operations in Marietta and Parkersburg in 1880s, and were electrified in 1895 and 1898, respectively. The interurban line between the two cities was completed in 1903. In 1923, the line became part of the Monongahela West Penn Public Service Company, which controlled many of the streetcar systems in northern West Virginia and western Pennsylvania. City streetcars were phased out in the 1930s, and the interurban service was discontinued in 1947.

Charles City Western – Iowa

Although operation in the early years was through gasoline powered streetcars, the Charles City Western was electrified between 1914 and 1915. In 1915, MSR 621 was purchased among other new and used cars from other systems for passenger



TCRT #621 remained in service for 65 years, the latter 42 on Iowa's Charles City Western interurban. It was painted orange with maroon windows and doors.

service. Car 621 was one of the 1892 double-truck closed streetcars built to a TCRT design. Renumbered 52, passenger service for the car lasted five years on the Charles City Western, with the car being converted to work service in 1920. The car lived out the next few decades in work service until being scrapped in 1957, the longest-lived of all non-home-built Twin Cities streetcars except the three cable cars that became Selby Hill incline cars and later shifter cars at Snelling Shops.

Kansas City, Lawrence, & Topeka – Kansas and Missouri

More commonly known as the Hocker Line, the Kansas City, Lawrence, & Topeka was built to spur real estate development in the Kansas City suburbs in Kansas. Despite its name, the line extended only slightly beyond Shawnee to the location of East Zarah. The Hocker Line pur-

chased double-truck MSR cars 610, 616, 622, and 623 to replace some of their other double truck streetcars that

had a habit of derailing. Car 616 was purchased in 1916, and cars 610, 622, and 623 followed in 1917. Most sources note the cars were purchased without trucks, as the Hocker line wanted to reuse streetcar trucks they already possessed, but When Missouri Took the Trolley indicates the cars arrived with Bemis trucks. Those may have been trucks retired earlier by TCRT, placed under the cars for shipping, then replaced after they arrived. Regardless, the cars operated until the line shut down in 1927. The line was revived in 1928, but the former MSR cars were not used during this time, as the Hocker line rented streetcars from the Kansas City Public Service company. Suffering decline from the depression, the last interurban car ran in 1934.

Heartland Traction and Trolley Through the Countryside both note a single-truck open streetcar, built in 1904, on the Hocker Grove line roster as having been purchased from the MSR in 1907. The source on this is a



Kansas' Hocker Line picked up four of the 1892 American-built 600s that presaged the look of the Twin Cities standard cars.

Elgin, & Chicago's Fox River line. The Y&S purchased former TCRT cars 782, 783, and 785 from the Fox River line in 1918. These cars arrived as Fox River's numbers 208, 210, and 214. Their renumbering by the Y&S meant former TCRT 782 became Y&S 16, TCRT 783 became Y&S 18, and TCRT 785 became Y&S 20. The service life of Y&S 16 ended in 1921 when the car was scrapped following an accident. The service lives of Y&S 18 and 20 are not as clear. The Y&S began as a steam railroad in 1904, electrified in 1907, and discontinued passenger service in 1948. It survives today as a dieselized freight railroad.

Seattle Municipal Railway - Washington

The Seattle Municipal Railway purchased twenty-five streetcars from TCRT in 1918. The streetcars purchased were TCRT numbers 763, 765, 768, 769, 770-775, 777, 779, 786, 788, 797-799, 803-805, 807, 808, 810-812. All the cars were double-truck closed streetcars constructed in TCRT's 31st Street Shops during 1899-1900. Before shipment to Seattle, TCRT rebuilt all cars by adding front exit folding doors, and repainted and renumbered the cars to 300 through 324. Seattle later renumbered all cars 800 through 824 and operated them until all these cars were removed from service and scrapped in 1939 and 1940. The Seattle Municipal Railway ran its last streetcar in April 1941.

Most streetcars saw modifications during their service lives. Compare these views of the ex-TCRT Seattle cars, which received new trucks, fenders, headlights, destination signs and rear exit folding doors.

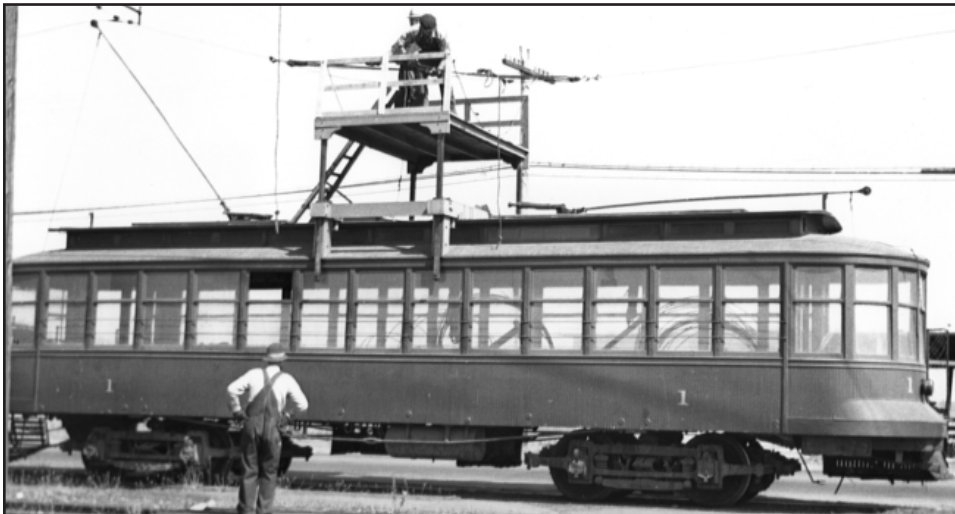


Tacoma Municipal Belt Line Railway - Washington

The Tacoma Municipal Belt railway purchased twenty cars from TCRT in 1918. The cars were numbers 766, 767, 776, 778, 787, and 817 to 831. All were double-truck closed streetcars constructed by TCRT in the 31st Street Shops during 1899-1900. At least one of the cars was modified for overhead wire work. Passenger service on the Tacoma line began in 1889 and ceased in 1948.



Tacoma's 20 cars included #1 (below), converted to overhead wire maintenance.



Winnipeg Electric Company – Manitoba, Canada

The Winnipeg Electric Company was devastated by an April 7, 1920 car-barn fire that destroyed a significant portion of its streetcar fleet. In desperate need of streetcars, Winnipeg turned to TCRT and purchased twenty streetcars. The streetcars purchased were all constructed by TCRT in the 31st Street Shops in 1900 and were built to the gate car design with double stream gates at the rear but were sold to



Winnipeg's purchased bodies only, rebuilt the front ends and extended the rear platform, among other modifications.



Winnipeg without trucks. The TCRT car numbers were 832-842, 844-846, and 848-853 built in 1900-1901. Winnipeg renumbered them in even numbers from 800 to 838.

Winnipeg also desired to modify the cars to its own company standards. According to the February 26, 1921 edition of the Electric Railway Journal, Winnipeg's shops built a single stream front exit door, extended the rear platform 1.5 feet and installed folding doors at the rear entrance/exit, built a

conductor's booth on the rear platform, and reduced the number of steps from the streetcar floor to the pavement on the entrances and exits. Once placed on Winnipeg's own streetcar trucks, the cars were much lower to the ground than the TCRT standard. Later the front windows were replaced and reconfigured. These cars served until they were withdrawn from service 1948 to 1950. The Winnipeg streetcar system operated from 1882 to 1955.

The streetcars in numerical order

This section lists the basic technical specifications of the streetcars sold used by TCRT. The details are organized by series of car numbers, so to find the details of a specific streetcar, the reader should consult the series of numbers the specific streetcar number falls within. This is not intended to be a full list of all streetcars owned by TCRT and predecessor companies, as that topic has been covered extensively in *The Electric Railways of Minnesota* and Russ Olson's working papers.

Minneapolis Street Railway

201-232 – 24-foot open horsecars built by the Pullman Palace Car Company in 1888. These cars were used as trailers when the MSR converted to electric streetcars.

233-262 – 24-foot open horsecars built by the J. M. Jones' Sons Car Company in 1888. These cars were used as trailers when the MSR converted to electric streetcars.

263-302 – 16-foot closed horsecars built by the J. M. Jones' Sons Car Company in 1888. These cars were rebuilt into electric streetcars in 1890 by placing each car on a motorized truck. Car 284 was rebuilt to 22' length in 1891 as an experiment by MSR. Further rebuilding occurred in 1892 to make the remaining cars in the group 22' long. All cars, except 284, were then renumbered into the 569-606 series.

363-422 – 18-foot single-truck closed streetcars built by the Laclede Car Company in 1891.

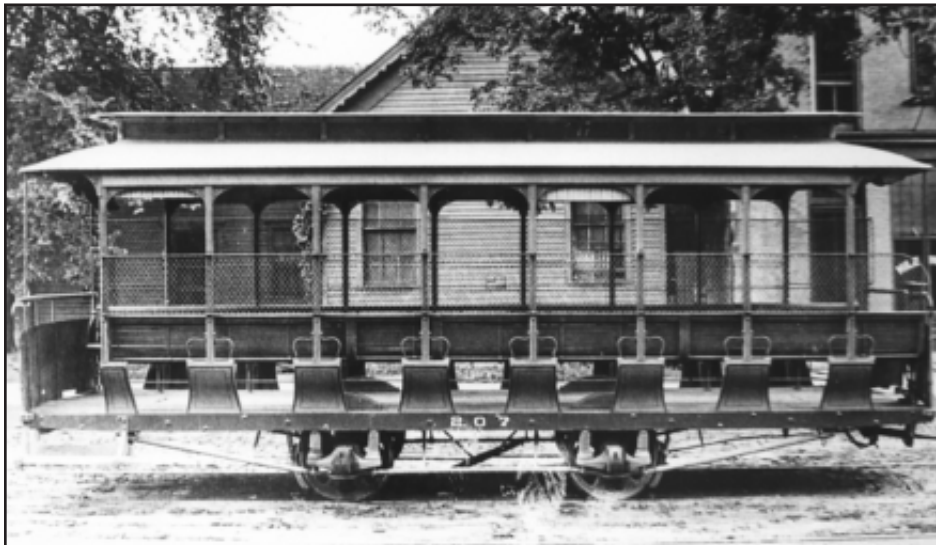
443-502 – 18-foot single-truck closed streetcars constructed by the J. M. Jones' Sons Car Company in 1891.

503-538 – 1-foot' single-truck closed streetcars built by the Northern Car Company of Robbinsdale, Minnesota in 1891.

539-554 – 36-foot double-truck open streetcars built by the Northern Car Company in 1892. The Northern Car Company plant suffered a fire on May 15, 1892, which destroyed cars 552, 553, and 554 as they were being constructed. No other cars in this order



MSR #480, built by J. M. Jones' Sons in 1891, was sold to Fargo. Shown outside 31st Street Station, it's wearing the 1890s orange and cream colors. Another 12 cars from this series went to Kankakee, IL; Boise, ID; Danville, IL; the Kansas City Leavenworth & Western and the Great Northern at Allouez, WI.



Minneapolis Street Railway #207 was one of 4 Pullman ex-horsecars sold to Fargo.

were destroyed in this fire.

555-568 – 36-foot double-truck open streetcars rebuilt from narrow gauge open trailers by the Northern Car Company in 1892. The open trailers had been purchased from the Motor Line. These cars shared a similar design to cars 539-554.

569-606 – 22-foot single-truck cars rebuilt by MSR from horsecars in 1892. See car numbers 262-302 above.

607-626 – 42-foot double-truck closed streetcars built by the American Car Company in 1892. These cars were the first streetcars originally constructed to the now recognizable TCRT design.

627-706 – 27-foot single-truck open streetcars built by the American Car Company in 1893.

Saint Paul City Railway

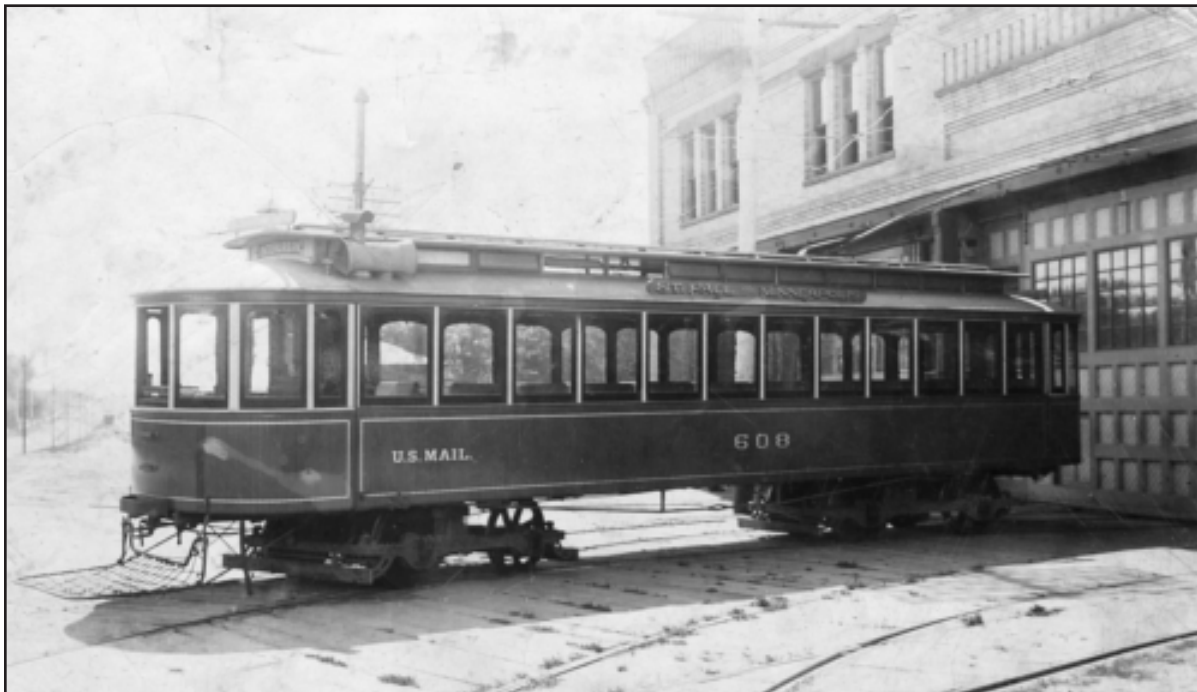
200-216 – 25-foot single-truck open horsecars or cable car trailers with deck roofs built by the Laclede Car Company in 1888.

217-235 – 25-foot single-truck open cable car trailers with railroad roofs built by the Laclede Car Company in 1888.

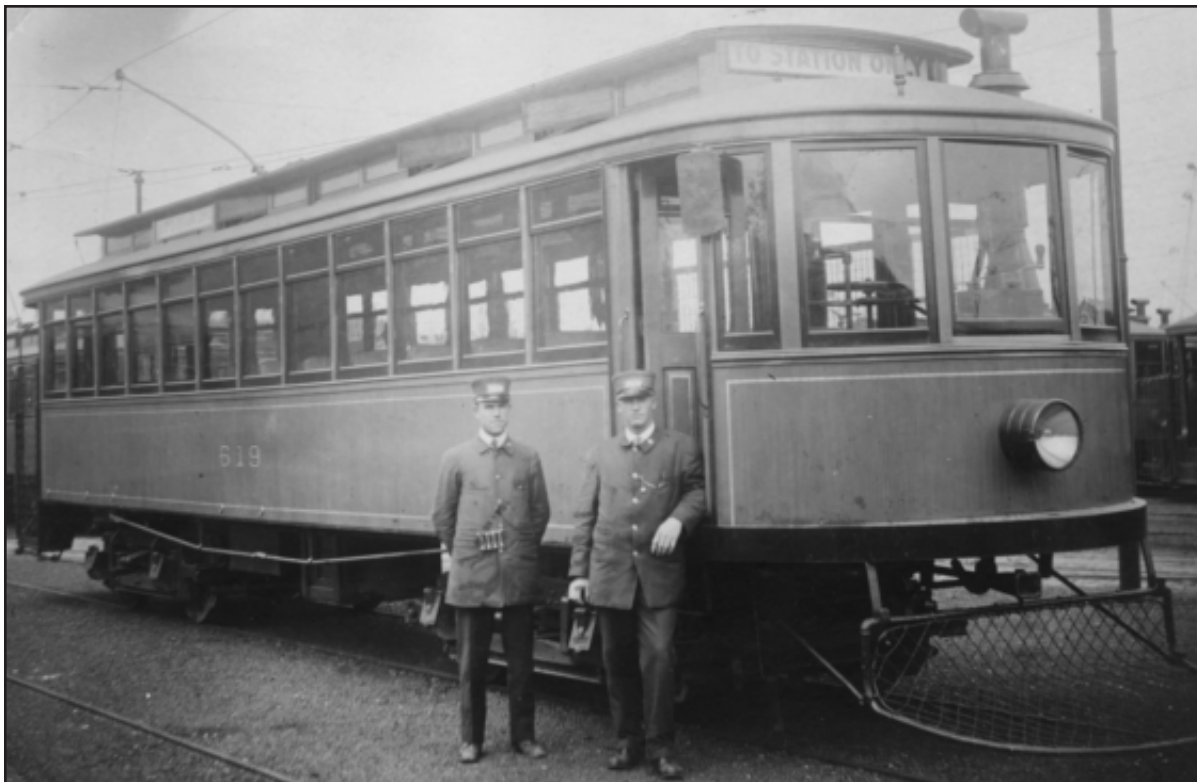
236-245 – 25-foot single-truck open cable car trailers built by the Laclede Car Company in 1890.

303-317 – 16-foot single-truck closed cable car trailers built by the Laclede Car Company in 1888.

328-369 – 18-foot single-truck closed streetcars built by the Laclede Car Company in 1891. Some cars in this series later had a 1 prefix added to



The 20 cars of the 607-626 series (American Car Company 1892) deserve special mention. #608 as built is at Midway Station. Rebuilt by TCRT as shown below, 15 of them were sold in 1914-17 to four other companies.



their numbers to prevent overlap with similar numbered cars from the MSR. Car 1366 was renumbered from 366.

503-527, 529-539 – 18-foot single-truck closed streetcars built by the John Stephenson Company in 1891. Some cars in this series were renumbered with a 1 prefix to prevent an overlap of numbers with cars from the MSR, thus cars 1513 and 1539 was originally 513 and 539, respectively.

528, 541-569 – 22-foot single-truck closed streetcars rebuilt by the Northern Car Company from 14' horsecars in 1892. Cars 567-569 were rebuilt from horsecars originally built by Brownell & Wright.

570-634 – 28-foot single-truck open streetcars built by the Laclede Car Company in 1893. These cars were constructed with 8 lateral benches on each side of a center aisle to conform with the current preference of TCRT for placing barriers on the sides of open cars and creating a single entrance/exit on their streetcars. All cars were later renumbered with a 1 prefix; thus, the car numbers became 1570-1634. These cars should not be confused with the later 1500 and 1600 series streetcars constructed by TCRT in the Snelling Shops.

Twin City Rapid Transit

16 – Work car built in TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1905.
25 – Snowplow built in TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1904.

759-772 – Class B-3 double-truck streetcars built by TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1899. All class B-3 streetcars were 43'2 5/8" long, 8'8 3/4" wide, and had wood frames.

773-788 – Class B-3 double-truck streetcars built by TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1899. These cars had a higher gear ratio for their intended service as high-speed cars on the Stillwater suburban line. These were also the first home-built streetcars with air brakes.

797-816 – Class B-3 double-truck streetcars built by TCRT's 31st Street Shops between 1899 and 1900.

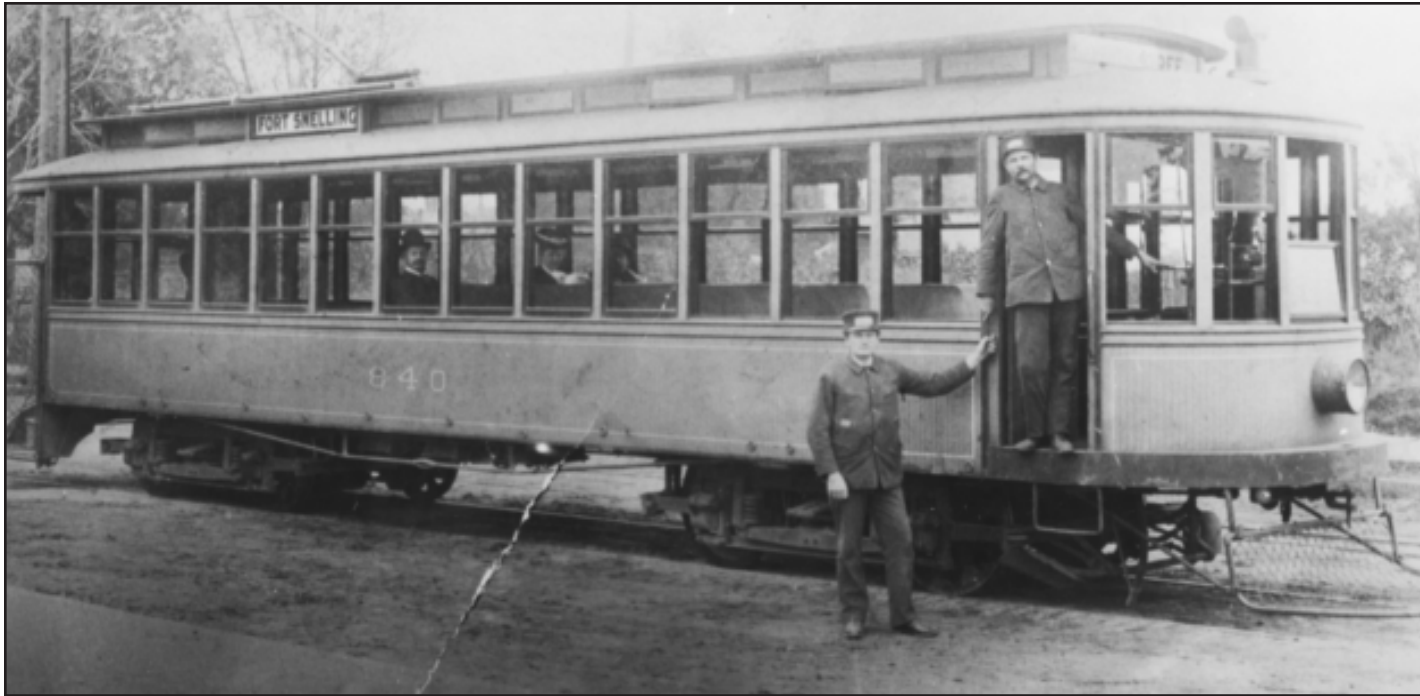
817-831 – Class B-3 double-truck streetcars built by TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1900.

832-859 – Class B-3 double-truck streetcars built by TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1900. Cars 833 to 844 were sold to the Duluth Street Railway immediately after construction.

833-844 – Class B-3 double-truck streetcars built by TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1901. These cars were built to replace the cars sold to Duluth.

860-867 – Class B-3 double-truck streetcars built by TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1901. These cars were built at the same time as the second set of car numbers 833 to 844.

868-899 – Class C-3 double-truck streetcars built by



Car 840 went to Winnipeg. It was one of the 83 class B-3 cars also sold to Duluth, Seattle, Tacoma, and Aurora Elgin & Chicago.

TCRT's 31st Street Shops in 1901. All class C-3 streetcars were 37'7" long, 8'4 3/4" wide, and had wood frames. These cars were shorter as TCRT determined not all streetcar lines needed cars of larger passenger capacity. Cars 868 to 872 were originally placed on the local streetcar lines in Stillwater.

1713 – Class L-8 double-truck streetcar built as part of a batch of 68 streetcars of various numbers in the 1700 and 1800 series. Construction was in the Snelling Shops between 1916 and 1917. Class L-8 streetcars were 46'8" long, 9'1" wide, and had steel frames. To satisfy the Anoka Line's request for increase baggage space in the front vestibule, TCRT modified 1713 by moving the front bulkhead back one window.

1852-1855 – Class L-8 double-truck streetcars constructed in the Snelling Shops in 1917.

Trolley Parties

-Aaron Isaacs

From about 1895 until about 1908 in the Twin Cities and Duluth, there was a craze for trolley parties. The idea was to charter a streetcar to either go joy riding around the city, or to head to a park or other recreational destination.

New technology made a new social event possible. Think about it. During the horse-drawn era a group would have to charter one or more carriages. The slow speed would limit the choice of destinations, the small vehicle size would make it harder for the party to achieve critical mass, and it was probably a bouncy, uncomfortable ride. Horsecars may have been available for charter, but no record of that has been found.

The electric cars changed the game.

Now you had a vehicle that could carry 40 or more in spacious comfort and could travel 20-30 miles per hour. The idea of a chartered car was something new. Your group could travel where it wanted without stops or transfers. As the streetcar system grew, it opened up new destinations like Como Park, Lake Harriet, Minnehaha Park and Wildwood.

Electricity made night travel much more attractive. The interiors of the cars were brightly illuminated for the first time. Electric lighting was still a novelty and entertainment venues capitalized on it to enhance their attractions.

Streetcars and entertainment venues grew together. Streetcars were fast enough and convenient enough to expand the market area and those places grew accordingly. Often there was common ownership. Across the

country streetcar companies opened some 400 amusement parks as a way to stimulate ridership. TCRT owned Wildwood Park, held the Lake Harriet entertainment concession and built Big Island Park.

Getting back to trolley parties, the first newspaper reference I could find was in the St. Paul Globe on Sept. 9, 1894. In a society page column, someone wrote "Why doesn't someone give a trolley party? In Philadelphia they are very popular and the cars are engaged weeks ahead. These affairs should be inaugurated in St. Paul under a September moon, par excellence, for developing flirtations and latent romance." We in the hinterland were a little behind the curve.

From then on, the society pages dutifully reported trolley parties that had happened, and announced upcoming ones. Here are some examples.

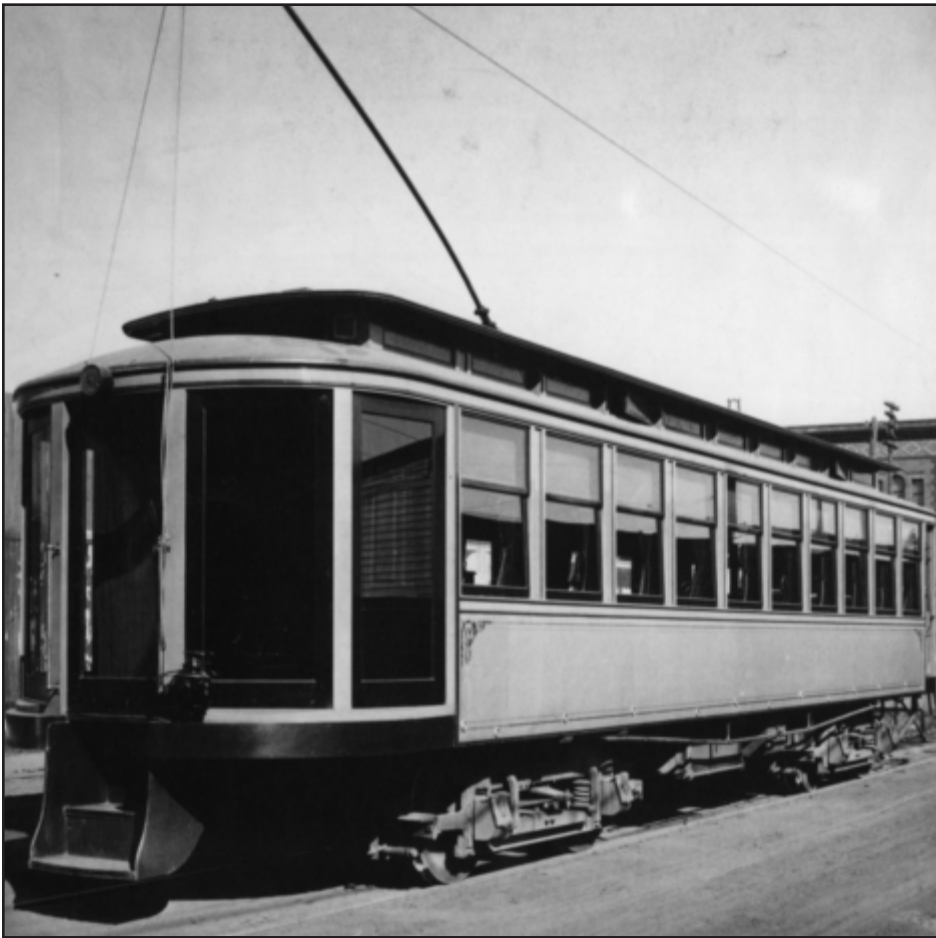
Minneapolis Tribune Sept. 1, 1895

A trolley party was given Tuesday afternoon by Misses Lottie Lutes and Ella Jones. The party consisted of Mrs. C. C. Brand, Miss Nellie C. Jones, Mrs. Warner and son Archibald, with Como Park as its destination.

And

Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Rounds gave a trolley party Tuesday evening, going to Como Park. The event was in honor of Mr. and Mrs. James Gibson of West Superior.

The young women of the Burtens House gave a novel leap year trolley party Friday evening. A gaily decorated summer (open) car, sidetracked on University Avenue, was captured early in the evening by 40 young people, with Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Fabians as chaperones. Amid shrill trumpet notes and the loud cheers of spectators, the car moved away for a circuit of the Twin Cities. A sextet from Danz's band furnished music en route and flags and bunting testified to the hilarity



Furnished with a bar, sofa and wicker armchairs, Thomas Lowry's private car was available for charters and trolley parties like this one (right) to Wildwood Park in 1901.

within. The trip included Harriet, Minnehaha, Lake Como. Supper was eaten on the return.

The Minneapolis Journal on July 11, 1903 ran an article that put flirtation to the forefront.

Have you been to a trolley party?

How to give one of these and what to wear. How to make yourself most fetching in the eyes of the man you wish most to please.

Of all the frolics of the summer girl, there is none she enjoys more than the trol-

ley party. It is her particular, pet diversion. Of course, there are trolley parties and trolley parties, but the one which the summer girl is sure to like best is the moonlight night trolley party. There must be a long stretch of road, with just a sudden curve or two to shut out the silvery light of the moon, the dark places acting as substitutes for tunnels. Quite enough said!

The car must be decorated to make it look as festive as possible and pretty color schemes may be introduced by having the globes of the electric lights match in color



the decorations of the car. Wild flowers and leaves may be used to deck the car, or simply bunting and gay ribbons.

To be the sort of a trolley party that the summer girl likes best there must be just as many men as girls and not only fun on the trip, but a good time when the end of the route is reached, sometimes a picnic lunch, stories around a beach fire and then, when

the fire dies out, a stroll on the beach.

No wonder the summer girl thinks trolley riding by moonlight great sport. Perhaps you would not think that the trolley-party girl would pay much attention to her clothes. That's where you are mistaken. She does. And she varies her costume according to the length of the ride. If the ride is a short one and its special feature is

the dance afterward, she dresses up quite a bit and covers her dainty frock, with a long coat or wears a hair net.

And it goes on to detail wardrobe choices for a variety of trolley party formats.

Perhaps in response to parties on wheels getting unruly, a Minneapolis Tribune article argued for decorum.

In addition to the etiquette for the average passenger who rides in a trolley car, there is also an etiquette for the trolley car

parties now so much in vogue. That merry informal affair--a trolley car party--should never be given without inviting one or more chaperones. Even if the temptation is great, the guests should not laugh and sign while riding through the city streets. They should avoid attracting too much attention. No matter how seductive the moonlight, a trolley party should be more of a jolly affair than a sentimental one. Though the chaperone is on board, the party should be over by midnite.

It wasn't all hormones under the moon.

A trolley party of the most approved order was the form of entertainment which members of the choir of the Church of the Redeemer and their friends in the number of 60 or more, enjoyed Thursday evening. A chartered interurban car started at 7:30 for a tour of the Twin Cities. A piano was on board; the Florentine mandolin club was concealed in the crowd and there

was music in the air all along the route. A serenade in front of the Hotel Ryan lined the street several listeners deep. Como Park was visited and the party indulged in dancing in the pavilion.

A trolley party to Minnehaha Falls and Lake Harriet, arranged by the flower guild of the People's Church, will leave Seven Corners at 4:30 this afternoon.

Here's an even more serious outing. Ellsworth Circle No. 8 of the Grand Army of the Republic gives a trolley party this afternoon to the Soldiers Home. There will be a varied program and the proceeds go to the soldiers of today.

These things could get large.

It is expected that 250 young people will attend the trolley party of the YMCA and YWCA this evening and five chartered cars will wait the excursionists at Washington and First Avenue S. at 7:30.

Here's another large event with a TCRT connection, the wives of a TCRT official and the architect who designed the Lake Harriet Chalet Station.

Mrs. Willard J. Hield and Mrs. Harry W. Jones gave a trolley party to White Bear Lake this afternoon to the Calvary chorus, numbering about 50. The afternoon was spent in boating and other recreations and the party reached Minneapolis by private car about eleven o'clock in the evening.

One newspaper story mentions that a trolley party was held for attendees of a national convention.

Implying that these were more than one-off events, there's a 1898 reference to a banquet of the Lotus Trolley Party Club.

In 1898 TCRT's 31st Street Shops turned out its first product, a luxurious private car for Thomas Lowry. It was available for charter and was frequently used for trolley parties. The Duluth Street Railway fielded the plush private car St. Louis.



Wildwood Park was a common trolley party destination and we have multiple group photos on the station steps.



In 1934, veteran DSR employee W. J. Holmes, writing in the Transit Topics employee newsletter, recalled what it was like to crew the St. Louis.

The "St. Louis" played an important role in society as well as in business. Many of the social lights of that gay age--friends of the management and others...used it for entertainment purposes, such as cruises to the club house at Billings Park and to the Northland Country Club--sightseeing jaunts around the city and in the winter snowshoeing and skiing at Woodland and Lester Park.

Seeking to capitalize on the trolley party trend, in late 1895 a local merchant named S. E. Olson appears to have rented an open car from TCRT and enhanced it for trolley parties. Here is the description from the Minneapolis Tribune, apparently lifted straight from the press release.

Mr. Olson will undertake to 'go Eastern cities one better' at least, and his trolley party car will be more magnificent, more resplendent and bewildering with vari-colored lights, and more completely and conveniently appointed in every way...When lighted and in motion in the evening it will resemble a veritable rolling chariot of flame. The incandescent lights with which it will be illuminated will be numbered by thousands, and their rays will be reflected from the facets of myriad of crystal ornaments and spangles, the whole to be played upon with alternate currents from a switch board located within the car. It will be a grand prismatic harmony, like the blended beauty of a myriad fragments of some shattered rainbow." Whew!

Although Olson's car, which he dubbed the "Blaze",

may have been available for charters, it ran in regular service on the University Avenue Interurban, where anyone could ride it by paying the regular fare. This implies that he used it to market his downtown Minneapolis store, rather than as a separate business. It appears to have had some staying power, because two years later in September 1897 he hosted a round trip to St. Paul aboard it for dignitaries, including the mayors of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth.

Automobiles appeared after 1900 and auto touring became the thing to do. The last Twin Cities trolley party announcement I could find was in 1908.

However, in May 1914, this appeared in the Duluth Herald. *Mrs. H. S. Newton will give a trolley party next Monday afternoon for a number of her friends. The party will leave Virginia at 2:15 in the new parlor car of the Mesaba Electric Railway Company for Hibbing."*

Above: The Duluth Street Railway's private car St. Louis, in front of the Superior Street carhouse.

Below: Chartered streetcars prepare to board a crowd at the original Como Park station, circa 1902.



Twin City Lines' advertising graphics

TCRT bought a lot of newspaper ads. Until the 1920s most were print-only announcements of route and schedule changes, devoid of graphics. The exception were advertisements for the Lake Minnetonka steamboats and Wildwood Park.

The peak ridership year was 1920 and thereafter ridership declined due to automobile competition, even as the number of track miles grew by one-third. TCRT began advertising to attract riders, burnish its public image and plead for better treatment by government.

Several themes emerged. The ads portray stylish people preferring to

ride than drive and deal with parking. Many ads tout transit as the key to the city's prosperity.

Ads lobbied hard against the 5 cent fare, a sacred cow mandated by the city councils and in place for 50 years despite inflation. With ridership and revenue on the decline, the company was being starved. A huge fight would eventually shift authority for setting

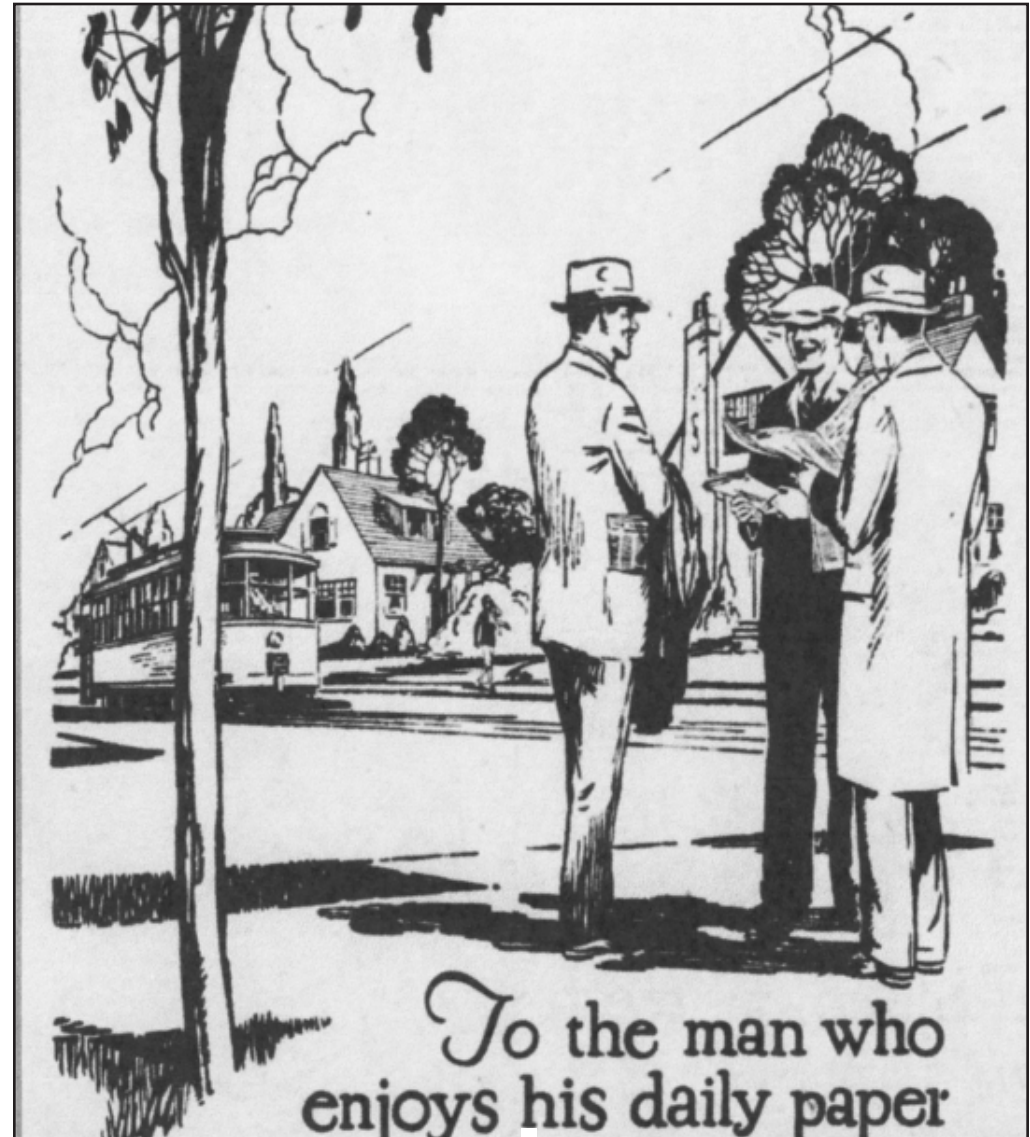
fares to the Minnesota Railroad & Warehouse Commission, creating enough political distance to get fare increases approved.

We don't know if TCRT employed an ad agency, but the quality of the graphics suggests so. Here's a sample of the artwork. We'll run more ads in future issues.

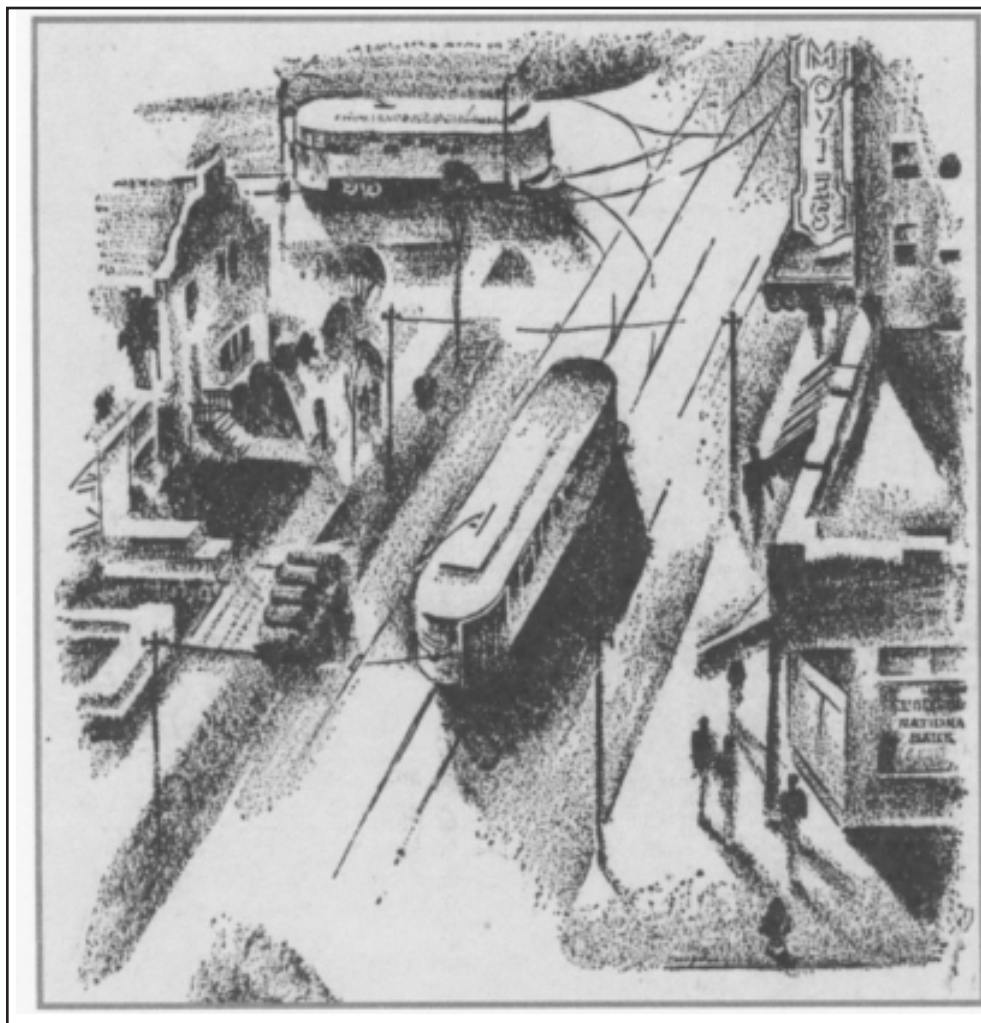
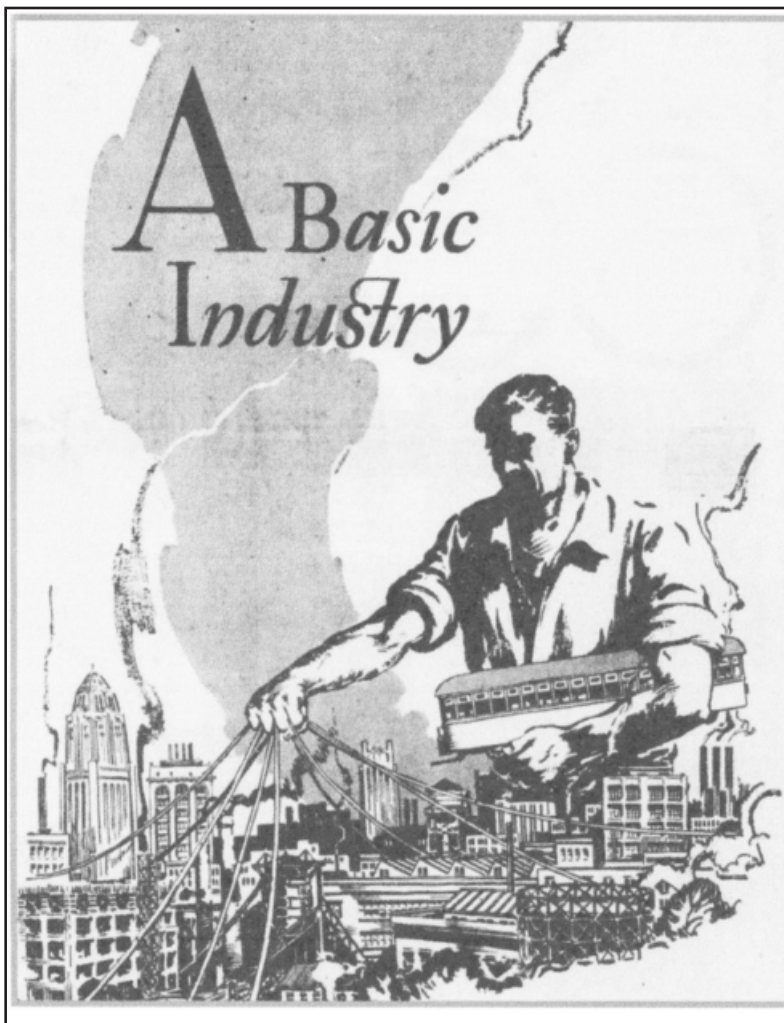


This Young Lady
Went Shopping...

Left: November 20, 1929
Middle: December 18, 1936
Right: April 20, 1927



To the man who
enjoys his daily paper

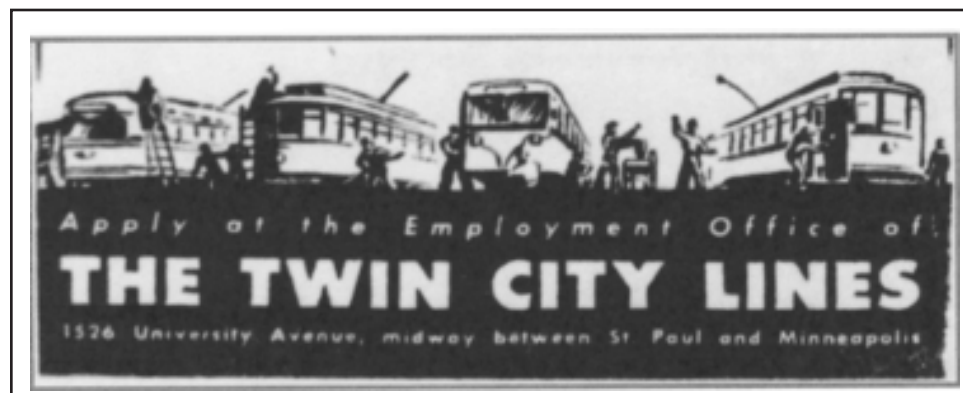
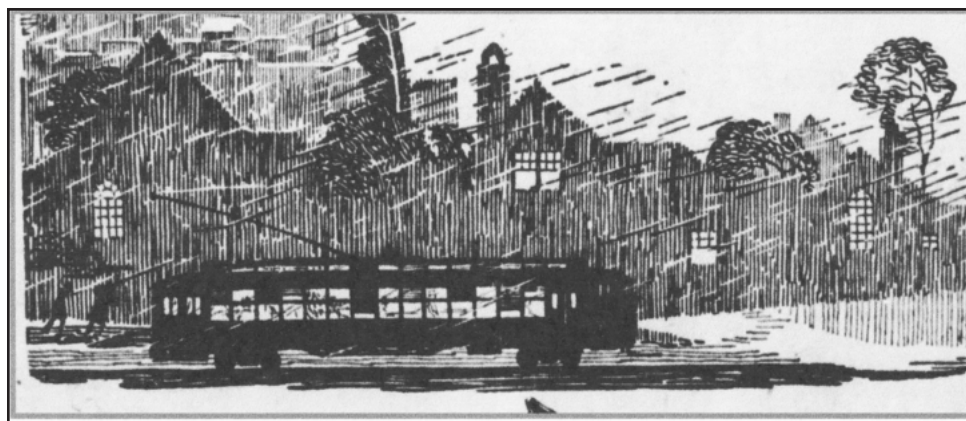


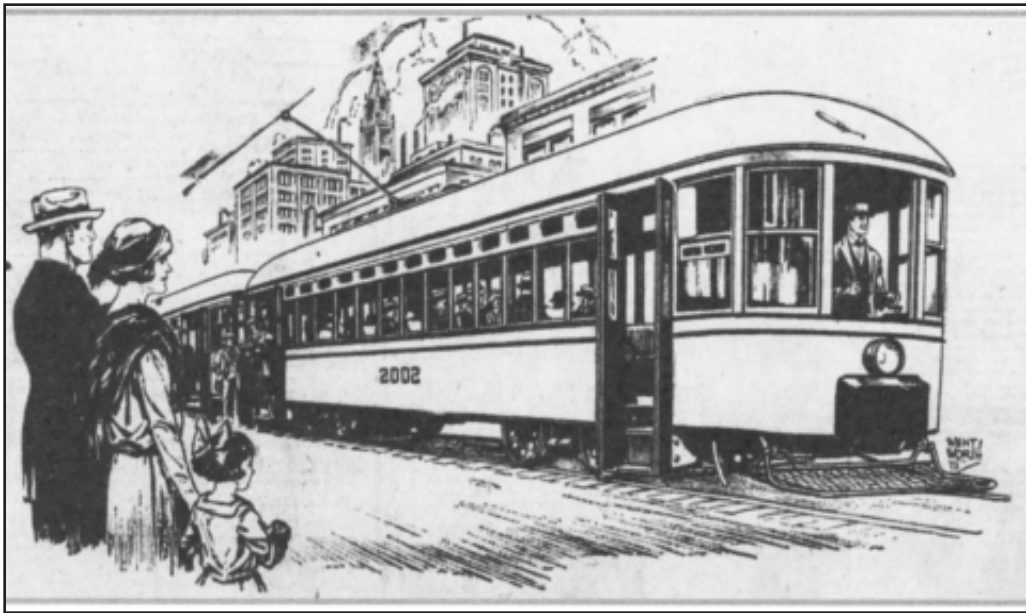
Top left:
January 1,
1929

Top right:
February
9, 1928

Bottom left:
April 13,
1927

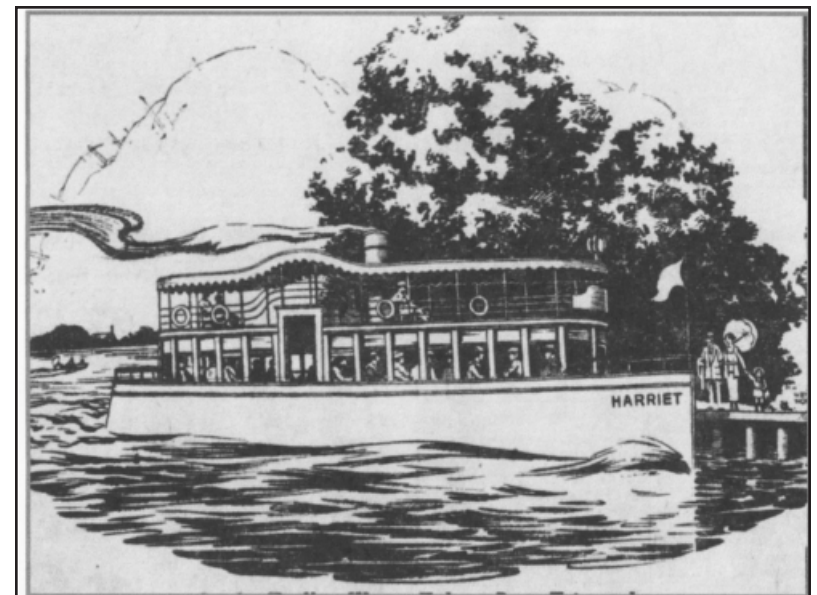
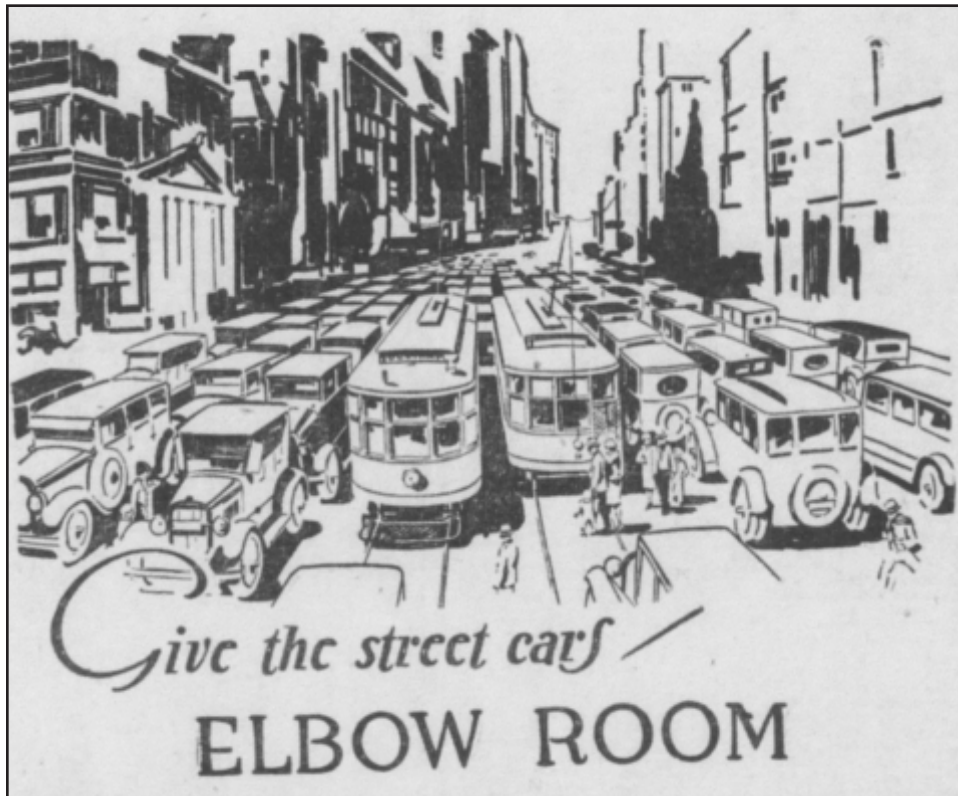
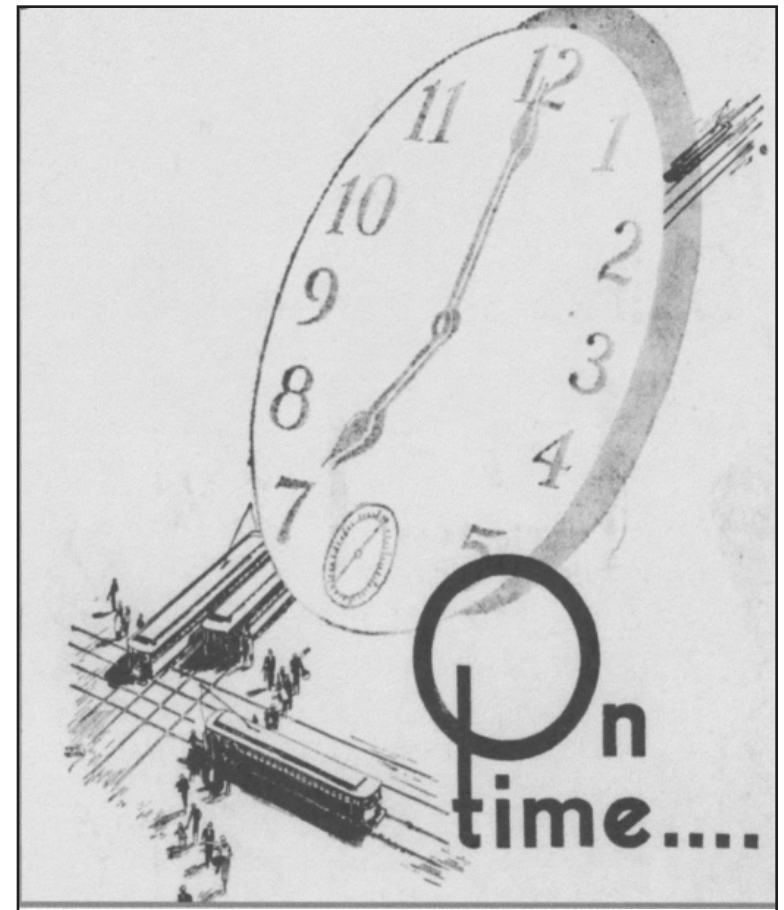
Bottom
right:
June 23,
1947

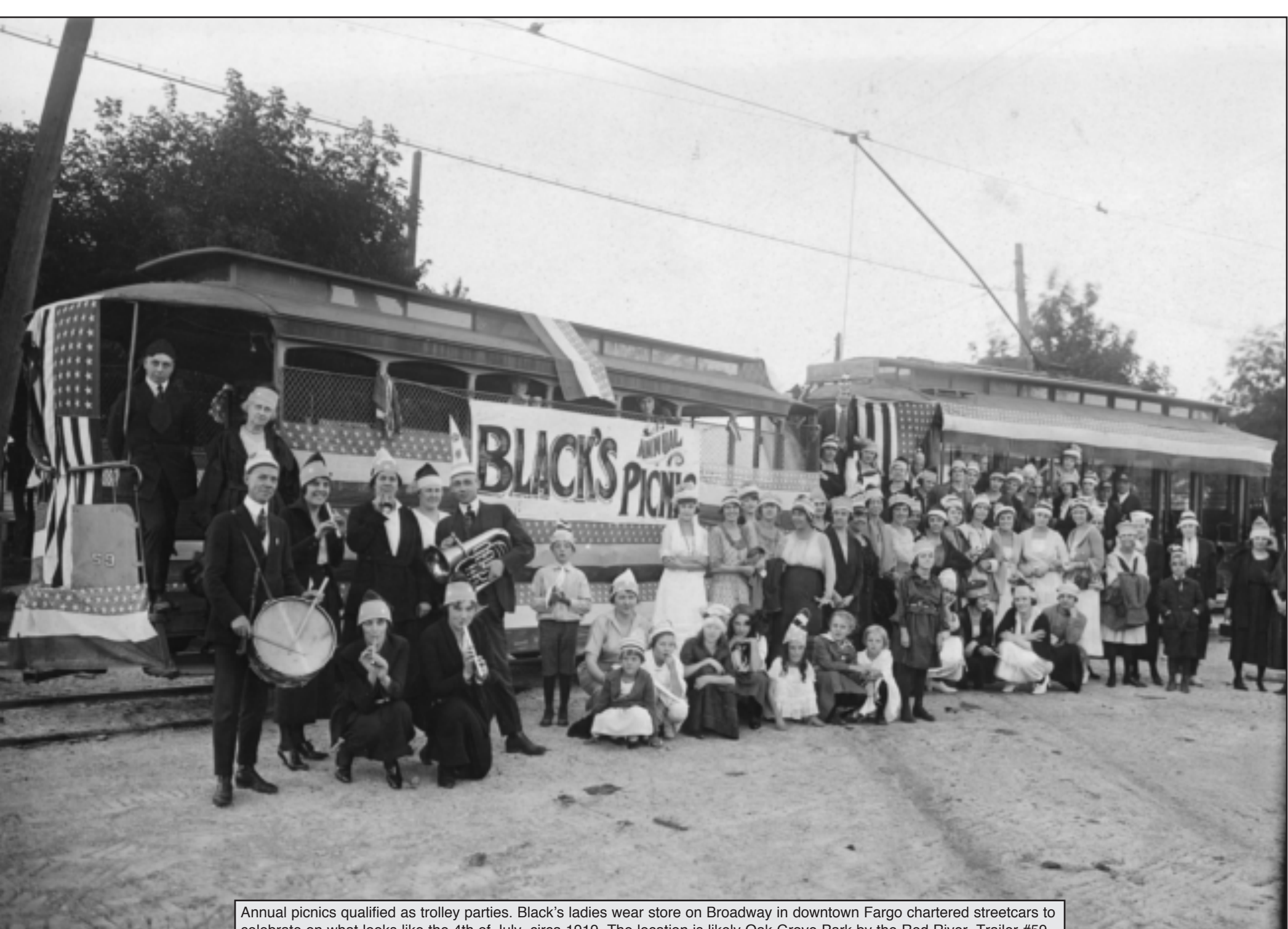




Above left: August 15, 1923
Below left: February 17, 1926

Above right: March 26, 1930
Below right: June 25, 1924





Annual picnics qualified as trolley parties. Black's ladies wear store on Broadway in downtown Fargo chartered streetcars to celebrate on what looks like the 4th of July, circa 1919. The location is likely Oak Grove Park by the Red River. Trailer #59 at left may have been purchased second hand from Twin City Rapid Transit. North Dakota Historical Society collection.



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

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